

Report of the Dacorum Representative on the Hertfordshire County Council Health Scrutiny Committee for the Health in Dacorum Meeting of 1st March 2017

A meeting of the County Health Scrutiny Committee (HSC) was held on 19th January 2017.

The Committee discussed the withdrawal of £8.5 million from adult social care funding by the Herts. Valleys Clinical Commissioning Group (HVCCG).

The Better Care Fund was an initiative started in 2014 under which the NHS and Social Services Authorities pooled resources. Herts. County Council (HCC) decided to go above and beyond the minimum required and focussed on older people. Initially the NHS and County Council put in the same amount of money. NHS budgets increase year on year but local authority budgets are decreasing so it was decided that the NHS would support social care. HVCCG asked what would happen if they cut the funding and were told by HCC that it would result in order hospital admissions and delayed discharges so for 2016/17 they gave £8.5 million. This was built into the HCC budget and protects adult social care at the level it is now.

In December 2016, HVCCG, which is in “financial turnaround” told HCC that the £8.5 million was being withdrawn. Whilst HVCCG had flagged financial concerns to all partners in October 2016, the extent of financial pressures was not known, nor was HCC told that cutting the £8.5 million was being considered at short notice. A withdrawal of this funding was not expected in the Strategic Transformation Plan (STP.)

The consequences of the withdrawal of the £8.5 million will be less care being available from the social care sector, the social care market becoming more unstable, fewer people having their conditions measured and monitored at home by care workers leading to more hospital admissions, more delayed discharges and a knock-on effect including crowded A&E departments.

A special meeting of the HSC was called for 8th February 2017, at which HVCCG’s decision to cut the £8.5 million was called in to the Secretary of State. This meeting was attended by Dacorum’s substitute representative, Cllr Jan Maddern.

Since then the decision has gone back to the CCG’s Investment Committee, but if the cut goes ahead, the decision will be called in to the Secretary of State at the HSC’s meeting on 9th March 2017.

At the meeting on 19th January 2017, Healthwatch Hertfordshire presented an item on access to dental services.

The report made 7 recommendations:

- 1) All dental practices to clearly display NHS costs and treatment bands.
- 2) Dental practitioners to make it clear to patients before treatment if they are receiving NHS or private treatment
- 3) Dental practices to make it clear if they are taking NHS patients or not.
- 4) Staff to be aware of and use the purple folder for people with learning disabilities.
- 5) Staff to signpost patients with physical disabilities to an alternative practice if their practices cannot accommodate them.
- 6) NHS England locally to ensure that discriminatory practice does not occur within Hertfordshire dental practices.
- 7) NHS England to promote information on dental services more widely.

Healthwatch Hertfordshire will visit 40 practices over the next two years to see if they are displaying costs.

HCC officers will contact NHS England and ask them to respond to the recommendations.

The Strategic Transformation Plan (STP) for Herts. And west Essex was discussed. Stephen Peacock the STP Programme Director and Jacqui Bunce (Associate Director, East & North Herts CCG) have the presentation. The STP has the aims of:

- 1) Working with local communities to give people the choices to live healthier lives.
- 2) Enabling people to stay as independent as possible when they have long-term conditions and, and to receive care and treatment close to home by enhancing integrated primary care and community health, social and mental health services.
- 3) When people attend/are admitted to hospital it is only because they need the level of care and specialised treatment that can only be given in hospital and once they no longer need it, they can return to the community.

It was said that the STP is a journey,

The STP team is taking the programme to other partners eg district councils and is coming to district councils when invited.